

Health board plans to ride out tough financial times



Written by Mandy Hochstedler

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County board of health members discussed at their Wednesday afternoon meeting what to do next in the Logan County Health District's pursuit of operating levy funds.

A 1-mill replacement operating levy attempt failed most recently in November, and similar initiatives were voted down by the public in March and in November 2007.

Overall, the board and administrators were in agreement that a levy attempt should not be made in a May special election.

"The (county) commissioners have said that they don't think we should have a levy this year, at least not in the May election," Health Commissioner Dr. Boyd Hoddinott said.

"They said the public needs to see what will happen without the levy and the (township) trustees need to see what their budgets are like (with a reduction in inside millage)."

Member Terry Stolly concurred.

"It might be in our best interest to hold off on the levy so that people see the reduction in services," he said. "It's not that you want to punish people, but you have to be fiscally responsible with what you have."

The board might consider placing a levy on the November ballot, or it might wait until next year for operating fund requests. However, prior to placing an issue on the ballot, members said that a strategic planning session would be in order.

"We have done something wrong and it upset the voters," member John Henschen said. "The board needs to get together and talk about what we did wrong and right before we go to another levy."

In organizational matters, the board chose Don Spath to serve as president, and Dr. Grant Varian as vice president, for the current year.

Members acted on several environmental health matters, including ordering Jerry Greenlee, licensee of Castaways Restaurant, 13629 State Route 235, Lakeview, to correct several repeat violations by Feb. 3. The order requires the restaurant to install an additional bathroom, repair the service sink and the door gasket on the walk-in cooler.

An order was also issued to David Owen of Marysville, owner of the Lincoln Arms Apartments, 400 West St., to remove debris and repair the ceiling in apartment 12, which is occupied, within 14 days. Craig Kauffman, environmental health director, said these repairs are necessary after an 8-foot by 8-foot section of the roof recently collapsed above this apartment. The roof has already been patched and it is not leaking, he said.

As a result of several members being away on scheduled vacations next month, the board enacted a resolution that will allow members to participate in a regular meeting through a conference call, but only if the member's participation is needed to meet quorum.

In other action, the board approved:

- 2009 annual appropriations of \$2,287,828;
- the third and final reading for amendments to a Regulation 40 which would increase a number of fees including: sewage site evaluation, \$225; real estate sewage inspection, \$90; real estate water sample, \$60; mobile food service, \$50; temporary food service, \$20; food vending, \$17.25; resident camp, less than 90 residents, \$115, more than 90 residents, \$165; single dwelling well permit, \$120; other well dwelling permit, \$150; and water sample, \$30;
- the third and final reading for amendments to Regulation 46, which would increase plumbing fees as follows: plumbing contractor registration, \$75; plumbing permit, base, \$40 plus \$7.50 per fixture;
- combining two part-time home health nurse positions into one fulltime home health nurse and aide position, filled by Diana Baughman;

- annual evaluations for Kelly Tevis, home health billing clerk, and Linda Kite, home health nurse;
- variance requests for Michael Berry, 7165 County Road 29, and Melanie Longbrake, 589 S. County Road 25, to maintain a yard hydrant with an open drain without the required backflow prevention device; and
- a variance request for Michael White of Pickerington to install a well three feet from the property line at 8596 State Route 368, Huntsville.

The next meeting is 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4, at the health district, 310 S. Main St.

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